

Amendment of the Claims

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A pretreatment process for solid sedimentary iron ore lump feed material ~~for a direct reduction processes that reduces to reduce~~ the formation of fines, comprising:
storing solid sedimentary iron ore consisting of a microstructure mainly constituted of micropores lump feed material for a predetermined time of at least one month in an open atmosphere, ~~therein providing time~~ to release internal stresses of the solid sedimentary lump ore feed material;
reclaiming the solid lump feed material stored for at least one month; ~~and~~
pre-drying the reclaimed solid lump feed material to ~~a temperature less than about~~ about 200° C and to a water content less than about 0.5% by weight ~~prior; and~~ [to]
charging the pre-dried, reclaimed feed material at a temperature of about 150° C to a gas-based direct reduction furnace.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein said pre-drying is accomplished in a feed storage bin by introduction of waste off-gases.
5. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 4, wherein the waste off-gas temperature is in excess of 300° C upon introduction into the feed storage bin.

6. (Original) A process according to claim 4, wherein said waste off-gases are removed from a reformer associated with the direct reduction process.

Claims 7 – 8 are cancelled.

9. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 further comprising charging the pre-dried iron ore lump feed material into the furnace separately from any lime coated pellet feed material.

Claim 10 is cancelled